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SUBJECT: RADICAL GROUPS HOLD LARGE, PEACEFUL PROTEST
AGAINST ISRAEL OUTSIDE OF U.S. EMBASSY

REF: JAKARTA 875 AND PREVIOUS

11. (U) This message is Sensitive but Unclassified.

12. (SBU) SUMMARY: Members of several radical Muslim groups held a peaceful rally in front of Mission on November 8 to protest Israeli actions. Approximately 6,000 demonstrators participated in the FUI-sponsored demonstration. The FUI--which advocates for the implementation of Sharia law in Indonesia--is made up of several radical Islamic groups, including Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), the Islamic Defender's Front (FPI), and the Indonesian Mujahedeen Council (MMI). These radical groups represent a tiny sliver of Indonesia's body politic. It was the first large demonstration in front of the Mission in some time. END SUMMARY.

ANTI-ISRAEL PROTEST

13. (U) On November 8, an estimated 6,000 demonstrators from the radical umbrella group, Islamic Community Forum (FUI), staged a protest in front of the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta. The rally was peaceful with demonstrators chanting and carrying anti-Israel posters which variously read "Destroy Israel with Caliphate" and "Save al-Aqsa mosque and Palestine from Israel and its allies." Police--including Mobile Brigades (BRIMOB)--provided Mission protection throughout the protest and the situation never grew unruly. It was the first large demonstration in front of the Mission in over eight months.

RADICAL GROUPS STAGE EVENT

14. (SBU) FUI is a hardline anti-Western umbrella organization made up of approximately 50 Muslim organizations. It includes radical elements such as HTI, FPI, MMI, Persis and the "Voice of Palestine." Groups such as FPI and MMI have been known to engage in low-level violence in the past. FPI, primarily an Islamic thug group, promotes the implementation of Sharia law in Indonesia. It is most notorious for its attack on a peaceful pro-pluralism rally in the capital in June 2008, and for organizing raids on bars, massage parlors and night clubs during Ramadan in years past. The group has been relatively quiet since the conviction and subsequent jailing of its leader, Habib Rizieq, last year for his role in the 2008 attack.

15. (SBU) The bulk of the November 8 protest was made up of HTI supporters. HTI, which claims to be non-violent, is one of the most active radical groups in Indonesia today. It is a transnational movement which advocates the imposition of Islamic law and the return of an Islamic "Caliphate." The

group promotes the implementation of Sharia law (Islamic jurisprudence) through religious outreach and indoctrination.

It is growing in size in Indonesia, primarily among urban middle-class intellectuals and university students, and is estimated to have approximately 50,000 active members and nearly 1.5 million sympathizers. (Note: HTI is a guarded and highly secretive organization, and does not provide exact membership numbers.)

A TINY SLIVER OF THE BODY POLITIC

¶6. (SBU) These radical groups represent a tiny sliver of Indonesia's body politic. Political Islam in general is on the decline with the Islamic-based parties suffering sharp setbacks in the parliamentary elections earlier this year. The rally was evidently staged in front of the U.S. Embassy because Indonesia does not recognize Israel and there is no Israeli Embassy. In addition, the U.S. is seen here as Israel's major supporter.

HUME